

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of and objections to the claims set forth in the Official Action of June 4, 2003, are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 4-7, 16 and 17 are pending.

Claims 2-3 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claims 9-13 have been canceled without prejudice as directed to a non-elected invention to be reinstated in a divisional application.

Claims 1 and 4-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claims 1, 4, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claim 1 and 4-7 have been amended.

New claims 16 and 17 are presented for examination. Both are readable on the elected species.

None of the claim amendments or additions introduces new matter.

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,842,732 Tharp (“the Tharp reference”). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested based on the following remarks.

As defined in amended claim 1, the claimed invention relates to an improvement in a traveling bridge filter having a plurality of filtration cells separated by cell dividers. The improvement includes a replaceable filtration module inserted into at least one of the filtration cells. The replaceable filtration module includes (1) a first wall and a second wall extending adjacent to respective ones of the cell dividers forming said at least one filtration cell; (2) means for replaceably

supporting the first and second walls on the respective ones of the cell dividers; (3) at least one connection element coupling the first wall to the second wall; and (4) a porous filter plate carried by said at least one connection element and extending between the first wall and the second wall of the module, the porous filter plate supporting a granular filter media during filtration. The filtration module is insertable and removable as a unit into and from the at least one filtration cell. Thus, among other things, the instant claimed invention requires a replaceable filtration module in a traveling bridge filter.

The Tharp reference is directed to an apparatus for aerating and mixing waste water. The device contains a porous “diffuser” plate, instead of a porous “filter” plate in a traveling bridge filter as in the claimed invention. The porous diffuser plate in the Tharp reference diffuses air into wastewater, whereas the porous filter plate in the instant invention removes solids from wastewater, which the porous diffuser plate in the Tharp reference is incapable of performing. The Tharp reference thus does not disclose or suggest “a traveling bridge filter having a plurality of filtration cells separated by cell dividers, the improvement comprising: a replaceable filtration module inserted into at least one of said filtration cells,” as recited in claim 1 of the instant application in combination with the other elements recited therein. (emphasis added) In view of the complete absence of this claim limitation in the Tharp reference, the Tharp reference does not disclose each and every element of claim 1, either expressly or inherently, and thus does not anticipate the claimed invention. Accordingly, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn and claim 1 should be allowed.

Claims 2-3 have been canceled, rendering the rejection to these claims moot.

Claims 4-7 and 16-17 depend from claim 1, and therefore are also free of anticipation by the Tharp reference.

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 4, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,882,053 to Ferri (“the Ferri reference”). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested based on the following remarks.

As defined in amended claim 1, the claimed invention relates to an improvement in a traveling bridge filter having a plurality of filtration cells separated by cell dividers. The improvement includes a replaceable filtration module inserted into at least one of the filtration cells. The replaceable filtration module includes (1) a first wall and a second wall extending adjacent to respective ones of the cell dividers forming said at least one filtration cell; (2) means for replaceably supporting the first and second walls on the respective ones of the cell dividers; (3) at least one connection element coupling the first wall to the second wall; and (4) a porous filter plate carried by said at least one connection element and extending between the first wall and the second wall of the module, the porous filter plate supporting a granular filter media during filtration. The filtration module is insertable and removable as a unit into and from the at least one filtration cell. Thus, among other things, the instant claimed invention requires the entire filtration module assembly to be insertable and removable as a unit, not merely the filtering element (i.e., “porous filter plate”) per se.

The Ferri reference is directed to a porous filter support plate. The plate in the Ferri reference is also usable in a traveling bridge filter system to remove solids from water being treated. The Ferri reference, however, does not disclose or suggest that an entire filtration module, including the walls, a connection element therebetween, and a porous filter plate, could or should be “insertable and replaceable as a unit into and from the at least one filtration cell,” as recited in claim 1 of the instant application in combination with the other elements recited therein. In view of the complete absence of this claim limitation in the Ferri reference, the Ferri reference does not disclose each and every element of either claim 1, either expressly or inherently, and thus does not anticipate the claimed invention. Accordingly, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn and claim 1 should be allowed.

Claims 2-3 have been canceled, rendering the rejection to these claims moot.

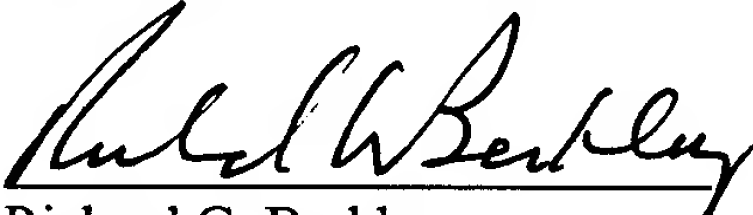
Claims 4-7 and 16-17 depend from claim 1, and therefore are also free of anticipation by the Ferri reference.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Prompt and favorable action is respectfully requested. A check in payment of the extension fee is enclosed. Applicant does not believe that any additional fee is required in connection with the submission of this document. However, should any additional fee be required, or if any overpayment has been made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees, or credit or any overpayments made, to Deposit Account 02-4377.

Respectfully submitted,
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